

Ref. #1

A Board U.S.S. Haven  
19 Nov., 1945.

## Mission to Nagasaki from Nurses Standpoint

The U.S.S. Haven arrived at Nagasaki, Japan (Island of Kyushu) on 11 Sept., 1945.

It's mission was to process and screen medically allied prisoners of war, to expedite the hospitalization of those urgently in need of hospital care; to select for temporary hospital study or treatment those cases which required diagnostic work-up or supportive or corrective therapy before qualifying for further evacuation by transport ship; and to screen out those who were free from infection and contagious diseases, and were well enough to be evacuated immediately by ordinary transport.

Upon arrival at Nagasaki a "field hospital" consisting of buildings least damaged by earlier bombings was set up on the concrete quay at which the Haven was moored.

Gangs of Japanese laborers were employed to clear the area of rank filth and wreckage.

As the P.O.W.'s arrived by boats, trains and ambulances, the stretcher

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cases were divested of their clothing, sprayed and dusted thoroughly with D.D.T. after being given a hot-bath and then routed directly to a designated bed on the hospital ship. Many of these stretcher cases were "living skeletons," some with one or both legs missing.

All the other P.O.W.'s were directed along a one way maze which led them respectively past @ tables where we nurses obtained general health data to aid the physicians farther down the line in screening and examining these patients. 64% of all the P.O.W.'s complained of body lice infestation. Weight loss was marked. 75% of the group lost 11-50 pounds. Many lost 80-100 pounds. Edema (beriberi) was the most common disorder. Respiratory infections, chiefly T.B., were next most common disorders. Dermatitis of various forms and other skin disorders were frequent and dysentery (Ascariasis and hookworm) were common. There were several cases of severe burns, some of which were due to the atomic bomb.

B an enclosed dressing area where clothes were discarded C a delousing area where the patients were sprayed with D.D.T. by teams of corporals @ a medical screening <sup>Area</sup> where with the aid of the preliminary questionnaire filled out by the nurses earlier, the D.O.W. was examined by medical officers. F the clothing new-issue area G final dressing area where the D.O.W. donned fresh clothing before being treated to fresh doughnuts, ice-cream, sandwiches and coffee and finally being directed to the hospital ship on waiting transports. The boys went in for the ice-cream and the bread in a big way - something they hadn't seen in three and a half years. The time <sup>they</sup> had been kept prisoners by the Japs.

The dietary problem aboard the hospital ship was a big one. Food was the first and foremost thought in the D.O.W.'s minds. We had to orient them to the fact that frequent "small" feedings of a high protein, high carbohydrate <sup>diet</sup> was indicated, rather than three heaping meals a day. Nurses and corporals had

to be on their guard to see that the patients didn't come back for second and third helpings. Some would attempt to take as many as six pieces of bread.

Patients that had eaten excessively of the foods dropped by planes at the P.O.W. camps after V-J day developed edema. This reason for this is water balance was so impaired as a result of Vitamin B-1 deficiency, anemia and other causes, that the increase <sup>amount</sup> of food and salt, resulted in the quick accumulation of massive edema.

Another interesting point is the fact that most of the P.O.W's were Dutch, Australian, & British - a small percentage of Americans. It was difficult to understand the Dutch and vice-versa. We had to resort to an interpreter in dealing with them.

I might also add that the American Red Cross did a grand job looking after the welfare and recreation of the patients. They supplied them with convalescent kits consisting of candy, cigarettes, tooth paste, tooth brushes, soap and wash cloths, shaving cream, razors, writing paper, socks and bedroom slippers. In addition to that they were supplied with Arts and crafts, games and other articles to keep them entertained.

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